



## U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney  
Southern District of Florida*

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December 13, 2005

### **NEWS RELEASE:**

R. Alexander Acosta, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Michael S. Clemons, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Miami Field Division, Brian J. Wimpling, Special Agent in Charge, Criminal Investigation Division, Internal Revenue Service, Southeast Area, Plantation Field Office, and Jesus Torres, Special Agent in Charge, United States Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, announced today that Gary C. Brestle and Isbelia Q. Brestle were arrest on charges of conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud, wire fraud, interstate transportation of property stolen by fraud and money laundering.

A criminal complaint and arrest warrants were issued by United States Magistrate Judge James M. Hopkins, against Gary C. Brestle (DOB 7/27/47) and his wife, Isbelia Brestle (DOB 3/5/66) of Palm Beach Florida. The complaint alleges that the Brestles were engaged in a "Ponzi" scheme in which they defrauded approximately 30 people out of approximately \$8 million between approximately October 16, 2001 and December 12, 2005. The Brestles convinced the victim investors that Mr. Brestle was buying consumer goods being shipped to the United States which had lost their buyer and were on the high seas at the time he purchased the goods. According to the Brestles, these consumer goods were bought at a deep discount and then sold at a substantial profit to new buyers before the goods reached the shores of the United States. The complaint alleges that no such containers were ever purchased, and, instead, the money obtained from the victim investors was used to pay old investors with new investors' money, to pay personal expenses of the Brestles and others, and to promote the scheme to defraud. Additionally, the complaint alleges that any consumer goods given to victim investors as samples of the item they had invested in were purchased at local retail outlets and were not samples of the consumer goods allegedly bought with their money.

Gary C. Brestle and Isbelia Q. Brestle will appear before a United States Magistrate for their initial appearance on Wednesday, December 14, 2005, in Fort Pierce, Florida. At present the Brestles are each facing one count of conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud (in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1349), three counts of wire fraud (in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343), three counts of interstate transportation of property taken by fraud (in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2314, and three counts of money laundering (promotion) (in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1956). A conviction on the charges of conspiracy, wire fraud and money laundering may each be punished by up to 20 years incarceration. The charge of interstate transportation of property taken by fraud may be punished by up to ten years incarceration. The total maximum sentence of imprisonment each defendant is currently facing is 170 years. In addition, the defendants face fines of up to \$250,000 on each count

as to the conspiracy, wire fraud and interstate transportation of property taken by fraud. On the charges of money laundering the defendants face fines of either \$500,000 or twice the value of the money laundered, which ever is greater.

The case is being investigated by Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent Joseph Sconzo, Internal Revenue Service Special Agent Andrea Nemati, and ICE Special Agent Letittia Jeffer. The case is being presented by Assistant United States Attorney Ellen Cohen.